WINTER 2022



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British Columbia

CANADA'S CONSTRUCTION OUTLOOK 2022

Also in this Issue:

Construction Outlook for BC

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Official Journal of Record for SMACNA-BC

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Formed in 1969, the British Columbia Sheet Metal Association (SMACNA-BC) was the first international chapter of the Sheet Metal & Air-conditioning Contractors National Association (SMACNA). Founded in 1934, SMACNA traces its history to the National Association of Sheet Metal Contractors established in 1910, and has 2,300 members worldwide.

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- To promote harmony in labour relations
- To study and help in the development and enforcement of governmental codes and regulations, and such legislation as may be necessary for the best interest of the public and the sheet metal industry
- To exchange technical, professional, and educational information with other contractor associations in the sheet metal industry and its allied trades in Canada and other countries
- To affiliate as a Chapter with the Sheet Metal & Air-conditioning Contractors National Association, Inc.

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COVER PHOTO Courtesy of Boston Sheet Metal

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PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY

Point One Media Inc.

Sheet Metal Journal P.O. Box 11, Station A Nanaimo, BC V9R 5K4 Toll-free: 877.755.2762 www.sheetmetaljournal.com

While information contained in this publication has been compiled from sources deemed to be reliable, the publisher may not be held liable for omissions or errors.

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> Printed in Canada. Postage paid at Coquitlam, BC.

Return postage guaranteed. Canada Post Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement #40719512.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: Circulation Department

Sheet Metal Journal P.O. Box 11, Station A Nanaimo, BC V9R 5K4 email: circulations@pointonemedia.com

> Official Journal of Record for SMACNA - BC







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EDITORIAL

THE TROUBLE WITH CHANGE

Change is inevitable. Whether you are a Bob Dylan fan (times they are a' changin') or a Buddhist (Nothing is forever except change), if you haven't already, you will at some point have to face the reality that nothing stays the same. This issue of *Sheet Metal Journal* is all about change and embracing the new even when doing that feels uncomfortable. (I mean, seriously, can we even attempt to cling to sameness after 2.5 years of pandemic changes, day in and day out? I think not.)

The thing about change is, for those who fear it, it is with fear of the unknown. When we change careers, change partners, take a new position, move to a new city—it isn't the career, partner, position, or city that freaks us out. It is not knowing what will come with this change. Will I fit into this new role? Will I excel? What will others think of me? What if they are jerks? What if I can't find my way around? And on and on. Not knowing what to be afraid of or if there is even a threat is difficult—debilitating, actually, for some—and managing that isn't the same as tackling a concrete fear.

In the other camp, those who love change *really love* it. They thrive on it, sometimes to a fault. A new job, new projects, new team, new commute—all reasons for celebration because they keep the mind sharp and the adrenaline pumping. These folks are rich with ideas, creative and inspired, and they are flexible—except when it comes to some things not changing. That's when it all goes to hell in a hand basket.

However, I digress. Like with so many things, the key to managing the inevitability of change is a balanced approach. Think positive, stick to the facts, embrace the process, take a breath when our throats threaten to close over in anxiety—all the things.

On August 31, 2022, we will all have to brace for an important change when our fearless leader, SMACNA-BC Executive Director Bruce Sychuk, steps down from his post and saunters off into what promises to be a rich and fulfilling retirement surrounded by friends, family, and plenty of golf in the sunshine. I started working with Bruce my first day of work with Point One Media, May 1, 2007. He ushered me into the world of sheet metal, not by teaching me about the trade, but by teaching me the importance of relationships in the trade. It was a valuable lesson I've relied on many times over the past 15 years, and not seeing Bruce's smiling face at industry events is a change we at Point One will feel for a long time.

In other news, the SMACNA-BC board is currently working on filling Bruce's shoes. Whoever steps forward to kick start the next chapter of SMACNA-BC's history will be embodying one of the most impactful changes the association has seen in 26 years, and I am sure the Board will choose well. Watch the spring issue for a broad look at Bruce's career and successes.

The guest editorial is all about changing your approach to understanding your own beliefs. Take a peek at page 5 for an



By / Jessica Kirby, Editor, Sheet Metal Journal

interesting look at how understanding another's perspective can strengthen your own.

This issue features three perspectives on changes the sheet metal industry can expect in the coming year (pages 10-14). We look at industry trends, opportunities, and challenges from national, provincial, and industry-specific viewpoints, summarized in our annual construction outlook series. We understand the limitations of predictions and forecasting, but as always, we worked hard to put forward some concrete issues to consider moving forward, such as prompt payment legislation, supply chain issues, and ongoing labour concerns.

While I have your attention, I also want to give a shout out to Women in Construction Week (WIC) March 6-12, 2022. Speaking of change, in Canada, women represent a little more than half of Canada's total population, and a little more than 60% of women over 15 participated in the workforce in 2019. Of course, COVID derailed some of those numbers, since childcare responsibilities are more prominently shouldered by women, but Canada (and BC and Alberta in particular) are still making important strides in the way women are represented in the workforce.

To get granular, the construction industry continues to struggle to find skilled labour, and part of the solution to that is recruitment in non-traditional sectors, such as women, Aboriginal communities, and newcomers to Canada. And from a birdseye view, it appears we are making gains, since 13% of the total workforce in construction is female (up from 8-12%, depending on geography, in 2015), and the closest contenders are the United States (9%) and the United Kingdom (10%). But here's the number to focus on: only 4-7% of *tradespeople* working in construction are females. That means the immense efforts SMACNA and Local 280 are making to recruit and train women are more important than ever. This WIC, take a moment to reflect on how you can help affect change for this important segment of the sheet metal industry.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy these pages, and I welcome your feedback or suggestions for future issues. As you may have noticed by now, the title of this editorial is misleading there really isn't any trouble with change, except maybe fighting it. However, the next time you are faced with an important change, I hope you find the strength to take a page out of John Maxwell's book: Change is inevitable. Growth is optional.

GUEST EDITORIAL

HOW TO CHALLENGE YOUR BELIEFS

While teaching listening skills at an all-employee meeting online this week, I included the fundamental need to have an open mind and consistently question your beliefs.

With the great public divides on questions of fact, including whether the earth is a sphere, it is clear that each of us should actively challenge our beliefs for validity.

In fact, we should proactively update our beliefs, as I've written before about Amazon's Leadership Principles, which note that "[Our leaders] seek diverse perspectives and work to disconfirm their beliefs." (my emphasis)

It's a novel statement for a company and one that few of us practice.

Indeed, human beings, for the most part, practice the opposite: we work to reinforce and confirm our beliefs. This is known as "confirmation bias."

We search our environment for information to confirm our beliefs, we interpret data to support our beliefs, we discount evidence that might conflict with our beliefs, and some of us even attack people who hold views contrary to our beliefs.

This is most apparent, of course, in our current political environment where we cocoon in segregated ideological communities with unlimited sources of "news" available to confirm our views.

In this world, critical thinking is more important than ever. We are inundated with more information than ever, and we are more distracted than ever, which means we are left with impressions of the truth.

We need to be able to sift through the information to find out what is actually true.

Critical thinking is the most important skill we must develop. But there is less of it on, of all places, college campuses where many students and faculty too often oppose campus speakers who hold views contrary to their own.

Many of us also cling to our views, despite them being outdated and no longer valid. We often hold beliefs long past their expiration dates.

With this in mind, here are a few tips to help you develop your critical thinking skills as you challenge your own beliefs:

1. Learn to listen without judgment

When we hear others discuss ideas and beliefs, we are apt to judge them, their conclusions, and their motivations so quickly that while they're talking, we're already thinking of our responses.

The fact is, our minds can't multitask, so if we're thinking about what we'll say next, or how we'll fix the problem, we're no longer listening to the person speaking.



By / John Millen

Instead, try to be fully present and hear what the person is really saying. Ask questions to go deeper and understand why they believe those positions. We so seldom really listen to people that it can be a remarkable experience for the listener to hear, as well as for the speaker to be heard.

2. Seek to understand

In his seminal book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey emphasizes one of the key habits, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood."

Covey shared an event he experienced one Sunday morning on a subway in New York that illustrates how we can hold mistaken beliefs:

People were sitting quietly—some reading newspapers, some lost in thought, some resting with their eyes closed. It was a calm, peaceful scene. Then suddenly, a man and his children entered the subway car. The children were so loud and rambunctious that instantly the whole climate changed.

The man sat down next to me and closed his eyes, apparently oblivious to the situation. The children were yelling back and forth, throwing things, even grabbing people's papers. It was very disturbing. And yet, the man sitting next to me did nothing.

It was difficult not to feel irritated. I could not believe that he could be so insensitive to let his children run wild like that and do nothing about it, taking no responsibility at all. It was easy to see that everyone else on the subway felt irritated, too. So finally, with what I felt was unusual patience and restraint, I turned to him and said, 'Sir, your children are really disturbing a lot of people. I wonder if you couldn't control them a little more?'

The man lifted his gaze as if to come to a consciousness of the situation for the first time and said softly, "Oh, you're right. I guess I should do something about it. We just came from the hospital where their mother died about an hour ago. I don't know what to think, and I guess they don't know how to handle it either."

Can you imagine what I felt at that moment? My paradigm shifted. Suddenly, I saw things differently, I felt differently, I behaved differently. My irritation vanished. I didn't have to worry about controlling my attitude or my behaviour; my heart was filled with the man's pain. Feelings of sympathy and compassion flowed freely. "Your wife just died? Oh, I'm



British Columbia Sheet Metal Association (SMACNA-BC)

Providing products and information related to the Sheet Metal Industry, including technical manuals and guidelines.

The unmatched technical and managerial expertise of SMACNA-BC Contractors is enhanced by the talent and skills of the workforce they employ. SMACNA-BC Contractors employ only Red Seal Certified Sheet Metal Journeymen and Registered Apprentices.

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BC Sheet Metal Association (SMACNA-BC) Executive Director: Bruce Sychuk 705 – 9639 137A Street Surrey, BC V3T 0M1 Phone: (604) 585-4641 E-mail: smacnabc@smacna-bc.org so sorry. Can you tell me about it? What can I do to help?" Everything changed in an instant.

3. Proactively find conflicting views

Instead of listening to news channels that confirm your views, seek out stations that promote the opposite viewpoint. If you watch Fox News, watch MSNBC. These broadcasts vividly illustrate how we can view the same information through our own colored lenses. Try to understand what information and experiences would bring people to hold those views.

4. Argue the other side

In college, my favorite extracurricular activity was serving on the national debate team.

In half of the debate rounds, my partner and I would argue an affirmative case for a legislative change, often a compelling issue of national controversy. In the other half of the rounds, we would argue against a proposal, often the same idea we had earlier advocated.

This gave us the ability to fully understand all of the nuances of arguments for and against positions. We developed critical thinking skills that allowed us to make better decisions and modify positions based on new and compelling arguments.

5. Kill your self-limiting beliefs

I believe the most destructive beliefs we hold are about ourselves and our own capabilities. We are locked into selflimiting beliefs that keep us from achieving our full potential.

We know we should try to achieve something outside of our comfort zones, which is where personal growth occurs, yet we are held back by our self-limiting beliefs. Often that is due to FEAR, which is often referred to as False Evidence Appearing Real.

6. How to question your beliefs

I'm not suggesting that we shouldn't have beliefs, or that we should change them all on a whim. Instead, we should examine our beliefs.

For additional help, here are questions that were developed by Owen Fitzpatrick, a consultant and speaker who teaches Neuro-Linguistic Programming (which is an article for another day). Fitzpatrick writes:

Become more aware of what you believe to be true. About yourself. About the world. About others. About your problems. Notice how you describe them and how you think about them. And challenge them in the following way:

What is the source? Where is the evidence? How does the evidence demonstrate that as a fact? Is it always true in every situation? What is a more useful way of thinking about it? What do you need to do about it?

SMACNA-BC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BRUCE SYCHUK ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

After an extremely distinguished career serving the BC Sheet Metal Association our Executive Director, Bruce Sychuk, has announced his retirement effective August 31, 2022.

Bruce became a journeyman sheet metal worker in 1978 and, after 26 years in numerous supervisory positions, he accepted the role as Executive Director of SMACNA-BC. Bruce has always been key in promoting the sheet metal industry and making sure the trade remains in demand and honourable. His commitment to keeping our industry relevant has always been his driving force. From providing educational programs, technical guidance, and labour relations, to countless events promoting the sheet metal industry, SMACNA-BC's success and visibility during his term will always be Bruce's legacy.

These are large shoes to fill, and the SMACNA-BC Board of Directors has taken on the responsibility of seeking out a suitable replacement. This is an exciting opportunity for the right candidate, and we are looking forward to the next page in the history of SMACNA-BC.

Please email *smacnabc@smacna-bc.org* for more information on this position.

PARTNERS IN PROGRESS CONFERENCE – BUILDING THE FUTURE TOGETHER MARCH 1 & 2, 2022

A successful future requires labour and management to work together toward common goals. To do that, we need strong leaders who can build coalitions; who have the knowledge and skills to understand the needs and opportunities of where the construction industry is headed in the next 5, 10, and 20 years; and be willing to capitalize on the best practices of the industry. Above all, the future requires recruiting and retaining the best, most skilled workers into the industry. *Partners in Progress 2022* is designed around the skills and knowledge necessary to meet these needs. We look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas, March 1 & 2, 2022!

Follow Partners in Progress on Twitter (smpartners), Instagram (smpartners), and Facebook (sheetmetalpartners) and look for #pinp22 to get the latest updates. Watch the spring issue of SMJ and the March issue of *Partners in Progress* magazine (*pinp.org*) for a recap of this legendary event.

8TH EDITION OF FIBROUS GLASS DUCT CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS AVAILABLE

SMACNA has released the eighth edition of its Fibrous Glass Duct Construction Standards in accordance with best practices from the North American Insulation Manufacturers Association (NAIMA) and Underwriters Laboratories (UL).

The Fibrous Glass Duct Construction Standards has been an industry resource for contractors since the first edition was published in 1992. First published in 1968, the manual has evolved to include industry innovations while providing contractors with the most updated information for fibrous glass duct installation and fabrication.

The latest edition highlights new guidelines based on current practices with updates including the addition of application details for 1400 El 2" boards; revisions to tie rod reinforcement, channel system reinforcement, partial wraparound reinforcement, and fasteners associated with the newer boards; and provisions for fittings, closures, and specifications as referenced by NAIMA and UL.

Materials, including the latest edition of the Fibrous Glass Duct Construction Standards, are available to order in book or PDF format. Email *smacnabc@smacna-bc.org* for details.

APPRENTICESHIP INCENTIVE GRANT FOR WOMEN AVAILVABLE

BC Centre for Women in the Trades has shared information about the Apprenticeship Incentive Grant for Women and Apprenticeship Completion Grant.

Q: What is the Apprenticeship Incentive Grant for Women (AIG-W)?

A: The AIG-W helps you pay for expenses while you train as an apprentice in a Designated Red Seal Trade where women are underrepresented. It is a taxable grant worth \$3,000 per level, awarded to registered apprentices.

Q: What is the Apprenticeship Completion Grant (ACG)?

A: The ACG is a one-time taxable cash grant lifetime amount of \$2,000 per person for registered apprentices who complete their apprenticeship training and obtain their journeyperson certification.

For more information and the link to show you how to apply, please visit *canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/ services/funding/apprenticeship-incentive-women-overview. html* •

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Learn more and register at *smacna.org* -

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Employers can register for an account, and once approved, they can post jobs or look through the H2H database of job seekers.

Learn more at helmetstohardhats.ca/en/employers.htm •

Yeah, we're talking about you... Or we could be! Email your company news to *jessica.kirby@pointonemedia.com* and have it listed in *Sheet Metal Journal's* Industry News section in print and online. Listings are free for SMACNA-BC members and industry partners.

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THE FIVE MINUTE FOREMAN MARCH 9, 2022

Our competitive edge is your talent. So, how do you build the best superintendents, foremen, and up-and-coming leaders to build your work? Join Mark Breslin, nationally acclaimed construction expert, to find out how.

This leadership training program provides practical lessons for field leader improvement. Created to make an immediate impact on field operations, this program is designed to help foremen, general foremen, and up-and-coming leaders understand and accept the role of leader, manager, and professional in representing their company. Key lesson plans and action steps for improved performance include:

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- Improving Safety Practices and Employee Mindset
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- Goal Setting for Higher Production
- How to Maximize Teamwork and Accountability

This 90-minute virtual program is concrete and powerful in its immediate relevance for foremen to adopt new methods and behaviours. In a highly competitive market, the best practices get the best results. This program is for lead men/women, foremen, superintendents and other field leaders or managers. Join us March 9, 2022 at 9:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m. PT / 12:30 p.m. –2:00 p.m. ET.

breslin.biz/store/events/five-minute-foreman-virtual-eventmarch-9-2022 •

NEW LEADERS AT THE HELM: SMACNA NATIONAL

SMACNA Appoints AI LaBella as New Board President

At the end of the annual conference in Maui, Hawaii, SMACNA National announced Al LaBella of Blue Diamond Air Systems was elected by the Board of Directors to serve as president for a one-year term.

Blue Diamond Air Systems is a full-service metal fabricator and mechanical contractor specializing in design and drafting, sheet metal fabrication, HVAC, piping, controls installation, and service maintenance. The company prides itself on a team-oriented approach and a dedication to client service. LaBella leads more than 100 employees at the Medford, New York-based company.

LaBella has a strong interest in technology, innovation, and education, which stems from his former role as an educator

INDUSTRY NEWS

and coach of high school football and lacrosse. His thirst for knowledge has contributed to his involvement in SMACNA, and he credits the association for providing him with the necessary education that gave him the tools to successfully run his business.

He has attended every SMACNA educational program offered, including Business Management University, Financial Boot Camp, and Supervisor Training. He has also served on a variety of committees over the last decade, including the SMACNA/SMART Best Practices Market Expansion Task Force, SMACNA PAC Committee, National Energy Management Institute Committee, and others. LaBella is also an active member of SMACNA of Long Island, where he works to recruit the next generation of industry workers.

"SMACNA embraced me as a new member many years ago and I owe the association for giving me the best educational experience and tools to help me succeed," said LaBella. "It is an honor to serve SMACNA as president. I look forward to all we will accomplish together in the next year to advance the industry."

In his new role as president, LaBella will pursue workforce development initiatives and use his platform to spotlight the importance of educational resources and tools to help contractors thrive within the industry.

Aaron Hilger Named SMACNA National's CEO

SMANCA National has announced Aaron Hilger as the organization's new Chief Executive Officer, effective January 1, 2022. Hilger is assuming the role upon the retirement of Vincent Sandusky, who has been SMACNA's CEO since 2008. A dedicated association executive that has provided strategic leadership to a variety of industry associations and coalitions, Hilger looks to advance SMACNA's mission of creating a competitive advantage for members, while also serving as an advocate for contractors.

"Having the opportunity to serve SMACNA and its members at the national level is as exciting as it is humbling," Hilger says. "For more than 75 years, SMACNA has been a shining example of what a well-run association can achieve for its members and the industry at large. I am highly confident about our industry's future and look forward to further accelerating the value SMACNA brings to all our members."

"Aaron's wealth of expertise and passion for the industry stands to make our association better," said Al LaBella, President of SMACNA. "Knowing the positive impact he's had at SMACNA New York State and SMACNA Rochester, I'm thrilled to work with him on a national platform."

Learn more at *smacna.org* -



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Canada's Construction Outlook 2022

Changes in the pandemic's status bring hope to construction sector experts, but supply issues remain

By / Robin Brunet

It was no secret that throughout 2020 and 2021, pent up demand combined with the construction industry's lightingfast implementation of COVID safety protocols resulted in robust activity across Canada. According to the Canadian Construction Association (CCA), this enabled the sector's 1.4 million workers to remain gainfully employed—and generate about \$141 billion to fuel the economy.

Now that the pandemic is poised to become an endemic, demand is healthier than ever. Sean Strickland, executive director, Canada's Building Trades Union (CBTU), notes that, "Across the country, the construction sector has seen steady employment in most regions. Many large shutdowns were delayed because of the pandemic, and we expect this spring to be quite busy as those delayed projects ramp up."

According to GlobalData's report, *Construction in Canada – Key Trends and Opportunities to 2025*, the nation's industry is expected to grow by 2.5 percent due to investments across the country in renewable energy, housing, water, and telecommunication infrastructure projects. Government funding is contributing to the growth: Ottawa has earmarked \$10 billion in funding for clean energy, irrigation, and broadband projects that alone are expected to create 60,000 jobs. It will also spend

\$14.9 billion in public transportation projects over the next eight years.

But challenges caused by government-imposed COVID restrictions linger, namely: supply chain shortages and long delivery times. "Unfortunately, there are no quick fixes to these problems," says Ian Cunningham, president of the Council of Ontario Construction Associations.

When CCA president Mary Van Buren was asked in December by media to forecast what would develop in the New Year, she predicted that supply shortages combined with rising inflation would create a "slingshot or stop/start recovery" in 2022.

She pointed out, "Virtually every material from lumber to steel has gone up in price. The fluctuating cost of building materials and the unpredictability of the supply chain are affecting budgets, estimates, and bids. The industry needs to look long and hard at areas that can be optimized to drive a better bottom line, including modernizing the tendering process.

"We also need to reduce delays in granting contracts and address cost escalation so that the sub-contractor isn't left footing the entire bill for soaring material costs." Workforce shortages are very much a concern of HUB Construction Insurance and Risk Services. In its 2022 *Construction Industry Outlook*, the organization illustrates the magnitude of the problem by noting that while many other labour-competing industries such as transportation and warehousing had by August of 2021 recovered all jobs lost due to the pandemic restrictions, construction had failed to recover about 20 percent of its jobs lost.

The *Outlook* stated, "By 2030, the average Canadian construction worker will be 42 years old, and young people aren't lining up work in construction. Over the next decade, firms need to recruit nearly 310,000 construction workers to replace those retiring and to meet demand—one report estimates the industry could be short 81,000 workers by 2030."

The million-dollar question is, how to rectify the shortcoming? "It's a problem that plagues all of the trades," Cunningham says. "The only immediate solution is immigration: persuading workers in other countries to move here—and that's difficult. In the longer term, we have to change our image away from the perception that construction is dirty work for unskilled people and toward the reality that we are in fact a highly technological sector that performs highly-skilled tasks."

Inclusivity measures are regarded as a way to attract new blood, specifically, women. CBTU points out that women represent only four percent of Canada's construction trade workforce, while sectors such as the military and law enforcement have surpassed 15 percent female representation. To close the gap, the CBTU's Build Together, Women of the Building Trades program promotes, supports, and mentors women in the skilled construction trades and has tailored recruitment and retention strategies.

In a similar vein, the not-for-profit Canadian Association of Women in Construction (CAWIC) has a five-year plan to encourage women to choose construction for their career, which includes partnering with other associations to conduct workshops, conferences, and speaking events, emphasizing the high school setting in addition to universities and colleges.

Another area where the CBTU will continue to focus its advocacy efforts in 2022 revolves around the fact that since certain regions have more employment opportunities than others at different times, skilled trades workers have always had to travel for work. However, while salespeople, professionals, and Canadians in other industries can receive a tax deduction for the cost of their travel under the federal *Income Tax Act*, "The same option is denied to skilled trades workers who work on job sites that are in different regions or provinces from their primary residence," Strickland says.

"In the prime minister's recent mandate letters, the need to

support labour mobility was included in letters crafted by both Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland and Minister of Labour Seamus O'Regan. CBTU is working hard to ensure a skilled trades workforce mobility tax deduction is included in the government's upcoming budget."

As for upcoming work opportunities, Strickland adds, "We continue to work with the government to invest in projects like industrial and commercial retrofits and developments such as regional clean energy power grids, including projects such as the Atlantic Loop and the East-West Power Grid that aim to remove interprovincial barriers to clean energy. As an example, the East-West power grid would involve building new electrical infrastructure so that British Columbia could sell Alberta electricity."

Approximately 93 percent of BC's energy is produced through renewables, while Alberta relies on coal for approximately 55 percent of its energy needs.

Finally, even though some analysts have warned of limited economic growth overall for Canada in 2022, Cunningham says, "We've been operating at capacity for years now, and the consensus is that our economy will puddle along at two to three percent growth this year—and that's enough to stimulate our sector."



Construction Outlook in British Columbia

By / Robin Brunet

Given that it enjoyed a 20 percent increase in employment over the four years prior to 2020, British Columbia was hit hard by the government-imposed COVID restrictions, suffering double digit declines in investment and the first decline in employment in over a decade.

What a difference two years make. According to BuildForce Canada, construction employment began to recover last year and will continue rising to 2024, increasing by 12,446 workers due partly to large infrastructure and civil projects, such as the Site C Dam.

In fact, BuildForce anticipates that the non-residential sector will lead industry growth not only in BC, but in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba as well, driven by public transit, health care, education, roadwork, and other civil infrastructure projects. The organization also expects that as international migration resumes, this will trigger a rise in BC housing starts to back above 40,000 units by 2024.

Joe Vales, member relationship manager at the Vancouver Regional Construction Association (VRCA), says, "In the past three years we have grown from a \$16 billion industry to \$20 billion, and there's plenty of work for everyone. Prevailing issues such as supply chain and labour shortages notwithstanding, we're in a good place."

However, while supply shortages may eventually be resolved, Chris Atchison, president of the British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA), says action must be taken to bolster the workforce. "BC is facing a shortage of about 11,000 workers, and a big part of the solution is diversification: we're still 94 percent male, up from 96 percent two years ago. We need to be a desirable and safe place for workers who aren't considered traditional in our industry, and for youth."

BCCA's bid to foster diversification is to introduce a baseline conduct standard, the Builders Code. "Nearly 300 contractors are participating, and hundreds more have downloaded the free policies," Atchison says. "The idea is simple: a baseline code of conduct standard for all construction sites in BC, where hazing, bullying, and harassment are not tolerated. This is a safety priority: if you're on a site that tolerates negative behaviours, you're not on a safe site. Period. "We've been working hard on getting [prompt payment] legislation to BC and recently co-hosted a series of town halls, which resulted in a promise from the attorney general's office that they would move forward. It's our top priority to make sure this promise is kept and legislation is tabled in fall 2022."

-Chris Atchison, BCCA president

"Employers who are adopting the Builders Code are already being sought out by skilled tradespeople who want to work in a positive culture. It's a game changer. There are many actions to be taken on workforce development, but fundamentally it's culture change."

The BCCA and the VRCA are also focused on prompt payment. "Contractors not getting paid on time is one of the biggest issues in our industry," Vales says, pointing out that the estimated cost in the BC construction sector is \$4 billion, mostly due to risk premiums, interest charges, and legal fees. "Legislation is the solution, and Ontario is progressive in that it is currently pushing through provincial mandates."

But BC is not far behind. "We've been working hard on getting legislation to BC and recently co-hosted a series of town halls, which resulted in a promise from the attorney general's office that they would move forward," Atchison says. "It's our top priority to make sure this promise is kept and legislation is tabled in fall 2022."

Finally, citing a "degrading level of standards with some public owners" and government withholding information regarding project opportunities that should be public, Atchison says in 2022 his organization will also focus on developing public sector procurement capacity: "We believe that adherence to the Capital Asset Management Framework is essential to the fair, open, and transparent procurement process that is an obligation and responsibility of government to taxpayers." •

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Sheet Metal Industry Construction Outlook 202

Survey Results

By / Jessica Kirby

In an unprecedented year, the BC sheet metal industry performed above average, stayed agile, and valued productivity over decreasing the workforce—all factors that are testament to a resilient group and a steadfast approach to adversity.

But how will that translate over time? Although nearly 70% of respondents to the 2022 Sheet Metal Industry Construction Outlook Survey said their businesses performed well above average, slightly above average, or comparable to 2020, more than half said supply chain issues and lack of skilled labour continue to challenge their operations. Nearly half also say lack of competitive pricing across the industry remains an issue, while covid-19 weighed in as the fourth most impactful influence on business in 2020.

"When you add up the cost of PPE and other measures and how they affect productivity, the costs are higher than what was immediately obvious," said one respondent. "That was just one of the challenges—the unknown or surprise costs."

Where covid-19 brought absenteeism, ever-changing restrictions, lower productivity, and general anxiety in 2020, last year the longer-term impacts, which included projects held back, the cost of PPE and other protective measures, and supply chain interruptions, were the main causes for concern. Contractors are expecting more of the same for 2022.

"With inflation market manipulation relating to shipping delays and other factors, covid-19, five paid days of sick time, and negotiations coming up, we see some large challenges ahead," said one respondent. "A large concern is the the competition knowing the uprise in costs and implementing them."

Despite anticipated challenges, as always, SMACNA contractors are prepared with strategies for fostering resilience as the current conditions remain in place for the coming year. Most of the 47% who performed better in 2021 than anticipated plan to focus on expansion and diversification in order to realize a more successful 2022.

"We are looking at productivity and what investments we need to make to help our [workforce] be more productive," says one respondent. "We haven't had to let anyone go; in fact, we increased our number of workers. But the only way that is sustainable is to focus on productivity and make sure we are all working smarter."

Thirty percent of respondents have their eye on lucrative projects set to come out this year, and an equal number of respondents (30% in each category) intend to invest in labour, expansion, and education and training to help keep the business on an upward trajectory for the next 12 months.

"There are some nice projects coming down the pipeline," says one respondent. "I know some contractors who have had great years these past few and we count ourselves as fortunate to be one of them. But it's not by accident. We invest in our team, keep in touch with the Local, and make sure our bids are fair."

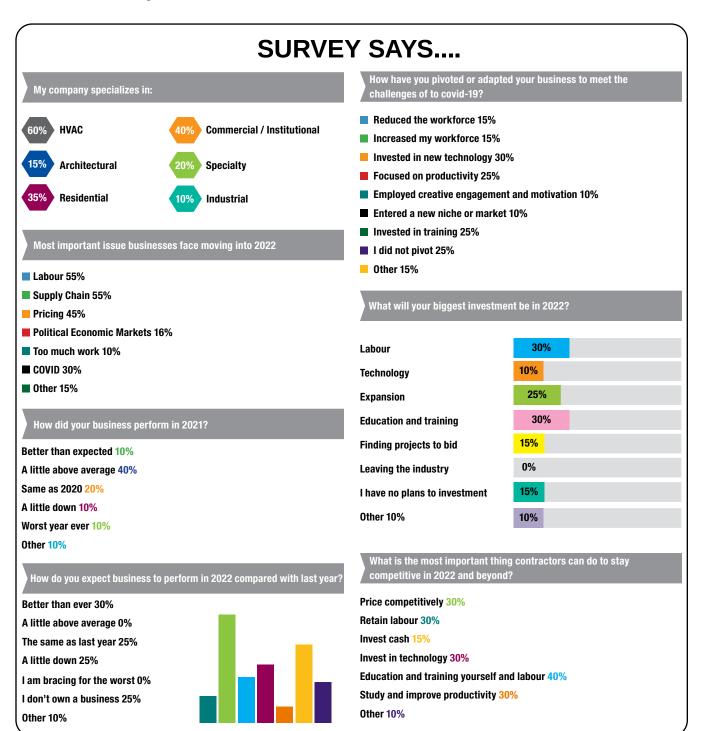
Another interesting number was the 25% of respondents who reported they did not put any measures in place (besides government mandated protocols) to pivot or adapt to covid-19. Those who added comments to that answer said they couldn't afford to make any additional adaptations, they were focused on maintaining the status quo, or they didn't see a need because business was steady enough that they didn't feel affected beyond the impacts of the standard protocols. At least three contractors identified having a good system in place prior to covid-19 was the reason they remained strong in a volatile market, and said their strategy moving forward was simply more of the same.

"Stay the course and keep numbers and quotes up," says one contractor. "Try to foresee delays in material, and keep the communication between office and field open." When it came to labour, several respondents said finding labour was difficult, but also saw light at the end of the tunnel, thanks to Local 280 and the Sheet Metal Training Centre's ability to turn out well-trained, skilled labour.

"We have a very capable and strong apprenticeship training program," said one respondent. Moving forward is a matter of attracting prospective apprentices and investing in their training.

While the nature of construction moving into 2022 is only as clear as the most recent predictions, there remains a sense of optimism among survey respondents, even those for whom the past two years have been trying.

"We have stayed steady for the last 18 months or two years, and in any other year that would be seen as a disappointment," said one respondent. "But considering the way things have gone, with labour shortages, interruptions in the supply chain, and, of course, the pandemic, we are counting our blessings and see staying steady as a win and a reason to stay positive about whatever happens next."



BOSTON SHEET METAL: People and Quality First

Words by Natalie Bruckner | Photos by Boston Sheet Metal

For South Surrey-based Boston Sheet Metal, no project is too complex. In fact, no matter what challenges are thrown their way, the team is able to look at the big picture, drill down to the specifics, complete the work, and even walk away upon completion as firm friends with other teams on the project.

Case in point: the state-of-the-art, five-level Zymeworks research and development laboratory in Vancouver. The 10,000-squarefoot lab was, in many ways, as complex as a project can get. Its focus on increased control over discovery research, antibody generation, medicinal chemistry, and bioconjugation for generating antibody drug conjugates meant that everything had to be designed in a way that left no room for error.

"This project was fully BIM modelled as many areas were very congested, which was critical for us in installing the full welded stainless steel lab exhaust duct work throughout," explains Justyn Atherley, project manager with Boston Sheet Metal.

Completing the project was a proud moment for the team at Boston, not only because of what they achieved, but also knowing that they were part of something that will make a meaningful impact in the lives of patients today and for many years to come. This is only one example. In the seven years that Boston Sheet Metal has been in business, the company has been involved in numerous residential, commercial (special projects), and light industrial projects, and has some exciting projects coming up, including the new EA Sports facility and the Amazon YVR6 distribution centre, both located in Burnaby.

"This is one thing I really admire about this industry... the challenges," Atherley says. "I am stimulated by challenges, and this industry is full of them. When they arise, I always look forward to sitting down with our team to work our way through them. We are not perfect by any means, but I think we are pretty darn good at getting through challenges professionally."

Boston Sheet Metal's reputation is second to none and makes them an obvious choice for any size project. "I believe what makes us stand out is our belief that 'everything is possible'," explains Atherley. "Construction projects are always challenging and full of roadblocks. Our team of experts works closely with our customers to ensure that we always find the best route forward when roadblocks present themselves, even when others say it's not possible."

The company, which specializes in installations, custom metal fabrication, BIM modelling, and HVAC design, is committed to delivering high quality, professional, and ethical construction-related services to its clients and customers. Beyond that, the company's focus is on keeping in mind the greater good within everything they do, while building long-term shareholder value, all while working with each customer to accommodate their tight schedules.

There really is no single secret to the company's success: it comes down to a few things including a hard-working team (the company employs more than 100 workers in the field, shop, and office) and open communication.





"Though simple, I strongly believe the three main factors required to provide the best possible service are communication, response time, and integrity," Atherley says. "Basically, this means communicate well, in a timely manner, and do or say what you said you were going to do. If not, then communicate in timely manner. Rinse and repeat."

The company firmly stands by this and as such has even created the acronym CRI to talk about building a successful business. CRI stands for communication, response time, and integrity.

"We often joke about making each other 'CRI'," says Atherley.

It's a philosophy that has buy-in from everyone at Boston Sheet Metal, and it keeps everyone moving in the same direction.

"We instill a 'teaming' mentality into our culture," Atherley says. "We are no less or more important than anyone we work with. We cannot do our work successfully if we don't work together as one team. This means that we try and align ourselves with the best suppliers, subs, colleagues, and even customers."

He adds that Boston Sheet Metal feels fortunate to employ some of the best people in the industry, many of whom have become close friends outside of work. "We have a depth of skill and expertise throughout, from estimation, project management, and field superintendents, to foreman, journeyman, and apprentices.

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ENGINEER'S DESK

CABLE VS TRADITIONAL METHODS OF SUSPENSION FOR HVAC SERVICES

Looking forward.... Before addressing why a contractor can greatly benefit from switching to cable for the suspension of HVAC services, I must first address our conditioned response to change.

Generally, as a species, we don't like change. We know this about ourselves. Even when we know change can help us, it doesn't mean it's any easier.

For instance, if you tell yourself that you're going to wake up early every morning and go for a run, intuitively, you know that this is a smart decision. But when your alarm clock goes off at 5 a.m. and it's pouring rain outside, you will find any excuse to hit snooze and go back to dreamland. However, if you do make it out of bed and into the elements, you'll find that it was the right decision after all and that you feel infinitely better throughout your day because of it.

Change is unnerving but sometimes necessary to reach new heights. It's not always comfortable and it's unfamiliar, but it can lead us towards massive personal and professional improvements. What if the great Henry Ford was happy with the old horse and buggy and didn't see the need to develop our mode of transportation into an automobile?

"If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses." —Henry Ford

How to defuse fear of change within an organization

Communicate often and thoroughly, and set expectations and benchmarks to better help employees understand everything they need to know about this change. Explaining why the change is required is always helpful. When employees better understand why this change is necessary for the company, it's easier for them to get on board with it, and perhaps even become a supporter for change. By fully explaining the 'why' behind the change, employees will see the benefits of the adjustment, instead of harbouring a closed-minded view of what is to happen in the future.

So, why should you consider cable as opposed to suspending ductwork with traditional methods such as threaded rod, strut, and hanger strap? Please allow me to explain why you may want to consider a change.

Benefits of switching to a cable suspension system *Significant time and cost savings on your project*

It's been the experience of contractors throughout BC, Canada, and beyond, that a contractor can save up to 85% on installation times when you use cable suspension kits compared to traditional



By Ryan Kinsella Territory Manager, Gripple

methods. As a pre-engineered solution, not only are cable kits faster, no pre-work, such as cutting or filing, is required. This ability to save time and labour by using a cable system is arguably the most attractive benefit that contractors can look forward to experiencing.

Health and safety

Some cable suspension kits are ready to use straight from the box, removing the need for potentially hazardous hot works and cutting on-site. In addition, these involve massive material handling reductions. For example, 150 lengths of 10 foot 3/8 threaded rod weighs in at ~500 lbs. The comparable material needed for cable would weigh approximately ~20lbs. This is not only a huge material handling savings but think about the overall weight on the structure.

Considerable reductions in packaging, vehicle movements, and embodied ${\rm CO}_2$

For every meter of cable specified to replace the threaded rod, it is estimated that a saving of 2.66 lbs of embodied CO_2 is made. This equates to a total embodied CO_2 saving of up to 95% when switching from threaded rod to cable. In 2018, the use of cable suspension systems rather than traditional methods delivered an estimated CO_2 saving of 120,000 tonnes in North America.

Alongside material savings, one can also ensure significant reductions in vehicle movements by providing pre-engineered solutions in a compact, one-foot-square cardboard box full of pre-prepared, ready-to-use kits. The solutions are easily transported and handled on site when compared to traditional systems—10-foot lengths of threaded rod delivered to site on heavy transport vehicles.

If you would like more information on cable suspension please feel free to connect with me or ask for references and best practices from current users. Some manufactures have free trial programs to allow contractors to test the products and make sure that it's the right decision for their company.

Ryan Kinsella works for Gripple Canada. Ryan got started in the industry through working with Hilti as a mechanical specialist and has since sharpened his skills through working with contractors throughout BC to save time and labor on suspension of various services such as HVAC, plumbing, and electrical application. He prides himself on not being a salesperson, but rather a product and application expert. Contact Ryan at *rkinsells@gripple.com*.

LABOUR MARKET 2021

In part one of this article, we focused on the issues we must deal with because of the ongoing shortage of labour and how to manage those issues. In part two, we examine other factors we should review when looking at our business and additional methods of making more money and having a successful business.

Growing your business

Many companies do focus on growing sales, but I believe it is better to focus on growing profits by improving efficiencies and focusing on the right customers and the right work. Growing sales often means your business struggles to keep up with processes, staff, and customer needs. A recent article in *The Globe and Mail* said, "According to federal estimates, at least 90% of Canada's 1.2 million small businesses are led by entrepreneurs who consider growth a secondary goal, if it's even a goal at all... they function to support their founders' lifestyles."

Artificial intelligence is proving to add value to many businesses. There are three growth areas in artificial technology—building information modelling (BIM), customer relationship management (CRM), and data collection.

We need to use technology more effectively. Design, estimating, accounting, invoicing, payroll, scheduling, and materials handling are all areas where we can use technology to enhance our business model. Virtually every facet of the industry can improve productivity by using technology.

Augmented reality, while in its infancy in Canada, has potential for safety training, real-time project information, team collaboration, project planning, and modifying projects. I predict this will have a major impact on the way we run our businesses over the coming decade.

What's the difference between a good contractor and a great contractor?

A good contractor will talk his way out of a situation that a great one would not get into in the first place.

Good is not good enough. Most of your competitors are good. With the upcoming labour shortage, you need to be great.

Good contractors make money on one job and give it back on the next. Great contractors don't give it back.

To be a great contractor, you need to be proactive. Spending your time putting out fires and keeping the business afloat is barely a strategy for survival, and it is certainly not a strategy for success.

Real leaders are focused on the long-term future. They have a vision. Mangers are focused on the present and the short term.



By Ron Coleman

Every business that aims at being successful must have proactive leadership.

In the current, very uncertain, labour market, that's a given. Without this leadership, you will be a has-been.

The biggest threat facing most contractors in the current and future market is, as we have discussed, a shortage of qualified labour.

There is no perfect size for a contractor. The correct balance between overhead and operations should get you the maximum results.

If, for example, you could add \$500,000 in annual sales without any additional overhead then that might be a good strategy. Alternatively, if you dropped some overhead how much work would you drop?

SMART Local 280 /SMACNA-BC Partnership



Left: Jud Martell, Local Union No. 280 President. Right: Bernie Antchak, Northwest Sheet Metal Ltd., SMACNA-BC Past President.



- B. Flaherty, Cornell University, Syracuse, N.Y.

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CONTRACTORS' ADVICE

On the other hand, if you need to add an estimator or other overhead person, you would need to recover at least eight times their cost in annual sales to justify the cost and risk of investing in that overhead.

Strategies for making more money, considering the labour shortage

Do I focus on labour-intensive jobs or material intensive jobs? In a tight labour market, go with the more material intensive jobs. They are also likely to be lower risk and lower profit.

Are we better off focussing on jobs that are more high-tech or jobs that are simpler? Which suits your particular business model?

Make sure you have price escalation clauses in your contracts to cover labour and material cost increases and cosndiering 5the implications of adding and subtracting.

Adding resources is easy. Subtraction is an action. It doesn't just happen. Do you have the leadership skills to take this action?

The best way to add profit is to subtract what hinders profit.

Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu advised, "To attain knowledge, add things every day. To attain wisdom, subtract things every day."

More does not mean better.

Our customers push us to quote jobs for their benefit, not for ours. If we do less work, prices will increase, we will become more efficient, and make more money.

Find the sweet spots

- What size jobs are best suited to you?
- What types of work are best suited to you?
- What geographic areas are best suited to you?
- What type of customers? GCs, end users, institutions, municipal, provincial, or federal governments?
- Which GCs? Which end users?
- Which jobs require the least overhead?
- Which jobs are the least risk?

For several years, the union employees at a BC Government body lobbied to allow workers to work from home, at least on a part-time basis. The employer consistently found reasons why this could not work. Now, due to covid-19, many of the employees, now that they are working from home, say they will not have a permanent workstation and are unlikely to ever return to the office full-time. Suddenly, the employers understood the myriad benefits to both the organization and the employees. This is reactive leadership, not proactive. It is your duty as a business person to provide proactive leadership.

Don't be a has-been

There are four key ways to grow a successful business.

- 1. More customers of the type you want.
- 2. Get them to come back more often.
- 3. Upsell them with additional value.
- 4. Be efficient.

As the lead person in your business, you should be spending your time here.

Identify what you need to add to and subtract from your business. Appoint champions to move these needs forward and mentor those the champions. This will help develop a more cohesive team within your business and allow you to spend more time in your leadership role and less time in management.

Probably the most important advice I give to service contractors is to increase their hourly rate by \$10. I have never had a client tell me that it backfired on them. You would have to lose a lot of billable hours before it hurt your bottom line. The customers you are most likely to lose are the high maintenance and slow paying ones. If you had five technicians billing out 40 hours per week, you would put almost another \$100,000 profit on your bottom line each year. Over ten years, that's an extra \$1 million in the bank. It's that easy. It's all about making money—not about who has the most sales.

Ron Coleman is a Vancouver-based accountant, management consultant, author, and educator specializing in the construction industry. He can be reached by email at *ronald@ronaldcoleman.ca*

SMACNA NATIONAL CONVENTION September 11-14, 2022

The 2022 SMACNA National Annual Convention is being held in person September 11–14, 2022, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This year will be different in many respects, yet we will find comfort in the high-quality networking and educational experience members have come to expect. Visit *smacna.org/learn/events/ calendar/2022-smacna-annual-convention* for more information.

IT'S THE LAW

YOU'VE GOT (OR MIGHT NOT HAVE) MAIL!

Securing a claim through a builders lien can often be the difference between getting paid for your work or eating the cost yourself. However, builders liens expire after a certain duration of time unless specific steps are taken. If those steps are not followed precisely within the time limit allowed, your builders lien (and the security that comes with it) can be extinguished.

The recent case of *Triad Mechanical Inc. v. Maple Leaf Green World Inc., 2021 BCSC 1865* provides an example where the enforcement provisions were not followed and a builders lien was extinguished, leaving the contractor with an unsecured claim.

Primer on Expiry of Builders Liens

To fully appreciate the weight of this decision, two things must be understood about builders liens generally in British Columbia:

- 1. A builders lien registered against title to lands will expire after one year from the date of registration unless, generally speaking, two things occur: (1) the lien claimant commences an action in the BC Supreme Court to enforce the builders lien; and (2) the lien claimant files a certificate of pending litigation against the subject property.
- 2. That one-year expiry date can be accelerated by the owner of the lands or by another lien claimant by serving a "notice to commence action" on all lien claimants, which has the effect of accelerating that one-year expiration period up to 21 days from the date of "deemed service" of the notice.

Facts of the Case

In January 11, 2019, Triad Mechanical Inc. ("Triad") registered a claim of builders lien (the "Lien") against title to lands owned by Woodmere Nursery Ltd. ("Woodmere"), wherein Triad claimed that Maple Leaf Green World Inc. ("Maple Leaf") owed Triad the sum of \$717,346.60 for the supply and installation of mechanical, plumbing, water, gas lines, HVAC equipment, and underground work.

On October 23, 2019, another lien claimant deposited with Canada Post a "Notice to Commence Action" to be delivered to Triad.

Pursuant to the *Builders Lien Act*, the Notice to Commence Action was "conclusively deemed" to be served on the eighth day after deposit with Canada Post, which was October 31, 2019. This meant that Triad had to enforce its lien claim and file a certificate of pending litigation within 21 days from that date (i.e., by November 21, 2019).

Although Triad was made aware of the incoming Notice to



By Matthew T. Potomak and Liam Robertson, Kuhn LLP

Commence Action, interestingly, the physical notice that the other lien claimant deposited with Canada Post did not get delivered to Triad. That notice was instead "returned to sender".

Triad did commence their lien enforcement action on November 21, 2019, but failed to file its certificate of pending litigation until November 29, 2019.

As a result, Woodmere (the owner of the lands) took the position that the lien was expired and demanded that Triad remove their lien.

Triad argued that they were not served with the notice, effectively arguing that they could not be "deemed" to have been served by mail if they never actually received the notice in the mail.

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I wish you success in challenging your own beliefs. To share your stories and ideas with me, please contact me.

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John Millen is a keynote speaker and CEO of the Reputation Group, a leadership communication company in Columbus, Ohio. John's purpose is to help leaders and entrepreneurs grow their businesses and careers by tapping the power of their stories. Since founding the company in 2004, he has worked with more than 7,000 leaders. Learn more at *JohnMillen.com*.

BOSTON SHEET METAL

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I believe one of the main reasons we have been able to have such depth is that the majority of our team members are very open to providing and receiving constructive feedback and also open to sharing and learning new ideas, so that they can all gradually improve themselves. We also try and find each person's unique strength, and put people in situations where they can flourish."

To further develop the skills of their team, training is a big part of their ethos. "As a union contractor [Local 280] and part of SMACNA as well, we have access to the best training and tools available in our industry," Atherley says.

Being relatable and having a true interest in people and what makes them tick can be seen throughout the company. Atherley admits he places a lot of importance on not only forming strong professional relationships in business but also in his personal life. "Life is short, so why not work with people you admire and enjoy working with the most?" he says.

And then there's the focus on people outside of the industry. Boston's philosophy of believing in having a higher purpose in what they do isn't just lip service. Every year the team comes up with creative methods to give back to the community, from an annual Affinity Cup Poker Championship (with BINGO) to raise money for BC Children's Hospital, to raising money for CKNW Kids Fund by securing a spot on the radio and asking anyone if they would like to go on air (Boston is a platinum donor and to date has raised over \$25k). The company also offers to donate one percent of all sales from select outside sales customers that order through the shop to a charity of their choice.

ITS THE LAW

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In response to the impasse, Woodmere applied to court to extinguish and cancel the lien filed against their lands.

The Decision

The Court ultimately held that the lien was extinguished for failing to file the certificate of pending litigation in time. As a result, Triad lost its lien claim and its claim for \$717,346.60 became unsecured.

Lessons Learned

- Contractors are not expected to be experts in technical requirements of the *Builders Lien Act*. However, contractors should be aware that there are strict requirements of timeliness that are not limited to the oft-discussed time periods for filing the claim of lien itself, but also the relevant time periods that follow the registration of the claim of lien.
- Although legal services can sometimes be a significant upfront expense, engaging a lawyer early to protect your secured claims can be a worthwhile endeavour. Contractors should consider retaining legal counsel promptly when considering securing their claims through a builders lien for unpaid construction workmanship, services, and materials.

This article was written by Matthew T. Potomak, lawyer, and Liam Robertson, articled student, who practise in construction law with the law firm of Kuhn LLP. This article is only intended as a guide and cannot cover every situation. It is important to get legal advice for specific situations. If you have any questions or comments about this case or other construction law matters, please contact us at 604.864.8877 (Abbotsford) or 604.684.8668 (Vancouver).

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